

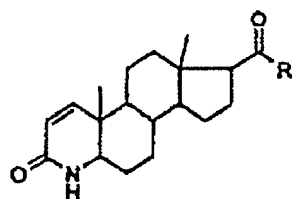
Applicant: Scharer et al
Application No.: Unassigned
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Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims by replacing all prior versions of the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 with the following listing of claims:

What is claimed is:

1. A process for preparing 17 β -substituted 4-azaandrost-1-en-3-one compounds of the general formula (I):



(I)

where

R is hydroxyl, optionally substituted, linear or branched (C₁-C₁₂)alkyl or (C₁-C₁₂)alkenyl; phenyl or benzyl; an -OR₁ radical, or an -NHR₁ radical, or an -NR₁R₂ radical;

R₁ is hydrogen, optionally substituted, linear or branched (C₁-C₁₂)alkyl or (C₁-C₁₂)alkenyl, or optionally substituted phenyl;

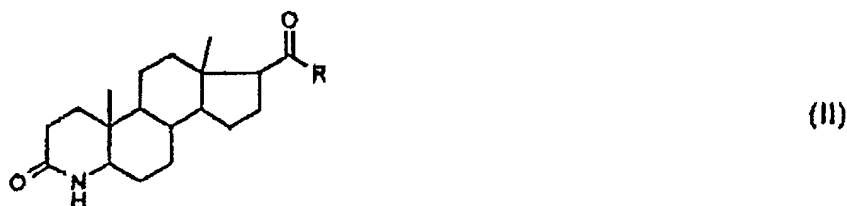
R₂ is hydrogen, methyl, ethyl or propyl; or

-NR₁R₂ is a 5- or 6-membered heterocyclic ring, and when R = hydroxyl also a pharmaceutically approved salt thereof,

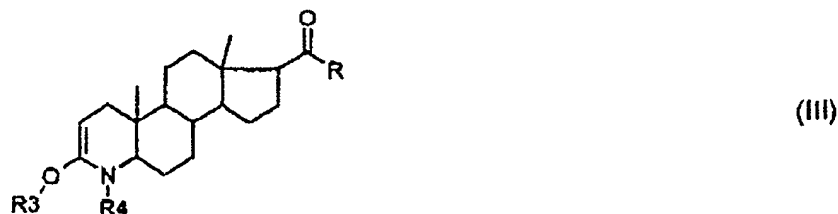
characterized in that

(A) protecting groups are introduced into the 3-keto-4-aza moiety (lactam moiety) of

a compound of the general formula (II):



so that a compound of the general formula (III) is formed:



where

R₃ is trialkylsilyl or, together with R₄, the -C(O)-C(O)- or -C(O)-Y-C(O)- radical;

R₄ is alkyloxycarbonyl or phenyloxycarbonyl, preferably Boc (= tert-butyloxycarbonyl); or trialkylsilyl, or, together with R₃, the -C(O)-C(O)- or -C(O)-Y-C(O)- radical;

Y is -[C(R₅)(R₆)]_n- or -CH(R₅)=CH(R₆)-, or ortho-phenylene;

R₅ and R₆ are each independently hydrogen, linear or branched (C₁₋₈)alkyl or alkenyl, optionally substituted phenyl or benzyl; and

n is an integer of 1 to 4;

and where, in the case that R is hydroxyl, it has optionally reacted with a protecting group;

(B) the compound obtained [in step (A)] is reacted in the presence (i) of a

dehydrogenation catalyst and in the presence of (ii) optionally substituted benzoquinone, allyl methyl carbonate, allyl ethyl carbonate and/or allyl propyl carbonate, and the Δ^1 double bond is introduced in the 1-/2-position, and

(C) the protecting groups R_3 and R_4 are removed and when R = hydroxyl the resulting compound is optionally converted to a salt.

2. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, characterized in that R is linear or branched (C_1 - C_6)alkyl, preferably methyl, ethyl, propyl or n-butyl, sec-butyl or tert-butyl, preferably tert-butyl; or an $-OR_1$ radical, or an $-NHR_1$ radical, or an $-NR_1R_2$ radical, preferably an $-NHR_1$ radical, preferably $-NH$ -tert-butyl, or optionally substituted phenyl.
3. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterized in that R_1 is linear or branched (C_1 - C_6)alkyl, preferably methyl, ethyl, propyl, n-butyl, sec-butyl or tert-butyl, preferably tert-butyl.
4. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterized in that R is an $-NHR_1$ radical where R_1 is 2,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl.
5. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterized in that the R_2 substituent in the $-NR_1R_2$ radical is methyl.
6. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterized in that the $-NR_1R_2$ substituent as a 5- or 6-membered heterocyclic ring is a radical of piperidine or pyrrolidine.
7. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-6~~ of claim 1,

characterized in that R₃ is trimethylsilyl, or, together with R₄, is the -C(O)-C(O)- or -C(O)-Y-C(O)- radical.

8. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-6~~ of claim 1, characterized in that R₄ is alkyloxycarbonyl, preferably isobutyloxycarbonyl, tert-butyloxycarbonyl, tert-amylloxycarbonyl, cyclobutyloxycarbonyl, 1-methylcyclobutyloxycarbonyl, cyclopentyloxycarbonyl, cyclohexyloxycarbonyl, 1-methylcyclohexyloxycarbonyl, preferably tert-butyloxycarbonyl.
9. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-8~~ of claim 1, characterized in that R₄ is Boc, trimethylsilyl, or, together with R₃, the -C(O)-C(O)- or -C(O)-Y-C(O)- radical, preferably Boc or, together with R₃, the -C(O)-C(O)- or -C(O)-Y-C(O)- radical.
10. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in claim 9~~ of claim 1, characterized in that R₅ and R₆ are each independently hydrogen, linear or branched (C₁₋₄)alkyl, or phenyl, preferably hydrogen, methyl, ethyl or propyl or phenyl, preferably the -CH(R₅)- radical or ortho-phenylene, preferably methylene, and n is 1 or 2, preferably 1.
11. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-9~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the compound of the general formula (II) for the introduction of the Boc protecting group is Boc anhydride or Boc carbamate or an analogous compound in which the tert-butyl radical is replaced by tert-amyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl or cyclohexyl.
12. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-11~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the dehydration catalyst [in step (B)] is selected from compounds of group VIII of the Periodic Table of the Elements, preferably from compounds of iron,

ruthenium and osmium; cobalt, rhodium and iridium; nickel, palladium and platinum; copper, silver and gold, preferably from compounds based on rhodium, palladium and platinum.

13. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in claim 12~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the dehydrogenation catalyst [in step (B)] is selected from Pd(0) compounds, and is preferably the tris(dibenzylideneacetone)dipalladium-chloroform complex.
14. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in claim 12~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the dehydrogenation catalyst [in step (B)] is selected from Pd(II) compounds, preferably from PdCl₂, Pd(dppe)₂, [dppe = bis(1,2-biphenylphosphino)ethane], Pd(dppe)Cl₂, Pd(OAc)₂, Pd(dppe)(OAc)₂ and/or from π -allyl-Pd complexes, preferably π -allyl-Pd chloride dimer.
15. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-14~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the dehydrogenation catalyst, preferably the palladium salt or the palladium complex, is stabilized thermally by the presence of an additional complexing agent, preferably 2,2'-bipyridyl or 1,10-phenanthroline, preferably 2,2'-bipyridyl.
16. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-15~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the quinine used [in step (B)] is a substituted quinine, preferably a C₁₋₄-alkyl-, halogen-, cyano- or nitro-substituted quinine.
17. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-16~~ of claim 1, characterized in that [in step (C)] the introduced protecting groups are removed by treating with a suitable acid, preferably by treating with formic acid, acetic acid and/or trifluoroacetic acid, preferably with formic acid.

18. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-17~~ of claim 1, characterized in that [in step (C)] the resulting compound where R is hydroxyl is converted to an alkali metal salt, an alkaline earth metal salt or an ammonium salt, preferably to a salt of sodium, potassium or ammonium, preferably to a salt of sodium or potassium.
19. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in one of claims 1-17~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the resulting compound of the formula (I) is crystallized from an apolar solvent, preferably from benzene, heptane, hexane and/or toluene, preferably from toluene.
20. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in claim 19~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the resulting compound of the formula (I) which is 17 β -(N-tert-butylcarbamoyl)-4-azaandrost-1-en-3-one is crystallized in the polymorphic form I from a saturated solution of toluene at a temperature of about 25°C.
21. (currently amended) The process ~~as claimed in claim 19~~ of claim 1, characterized in that the resulting compound of the formula (I) which is 17 β -(N-tert-butylcarbamoyl)-4-azaandrost-1-en-3-one is crystallized in the polymorphic form II from a saturated solution of toluene at a temperature of about 0°C.